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THE CHURCH OF CHRIST,

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IN the confidence that, we have traced "The Church through its infantile—childhood, extraordinary or miraculous age," we will look with more care into the promised "Perfection," which was to succeed—into the ordinary, or manhood state, in which the members were to come into "The unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." We have noticed that, in the church's full manhood period, the members were no longer to be considered mere "children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness whereby they lie in wait to deceive," but under the perfect light, of the Spirit, through chosen vessels, saints, "By speaking the truth in love, were to grow up into him in all things, who is the Head, even Christ; from whom, the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body, unto the edifying itself in Love." Eph. 4, 13-16.

An accurate knowledge of the great truths here stated by

Paul, we regard of the highest moment, to all who desire to learn the truth; and therefore, we invite attention to an unprejudiced and careful examination of the subject of

CHURCH ORGANIZATION.

We are aware that, some object to the phrase, "Church Organization," on the ground, it is not found in the Bible, and hence, we would prefer another style, if it would more clearly express the idea of the subject, we wish to examine. Jesus said, "On this Rock," I will build my church, "and if the form, church building," were in the scriptures, we would willingly use it. Neander, and Bishop Whately, used the form, "Church Planting," not because it is scriptural, but because, it gives the meaning of what they wished to describe. Paul said, "I have planted," and if he had said, "I have planted churches," we would of course adopt it, but we presume, he referred to the planting of the individual members; as he again said, "If we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection." Ro. 6, 5. Our religious associates frequently use the form, "Church Organization," to denote the appointment of the executive members of the church, or as equivalent, to making officers. It strikes us that, this use of the word, favors the view of Romanists and others who assume that, the regularly ordained officials who are supposed to possess all the authority in the church, are really, the church. In the Christian Quarterly, for July 1872, page 347, we find these words, "The fact that it, (*ekklesia*) signifies persons called out, selected, and separated from the masses, prepares us to expect that representives, or officers of the people, would be spoken of the *Ekklesia*, for they are supposed to be called out from among them." On page 351, the writer maintains that *Ekklesia*—church—was used to indicate a congregation, as *represented* by its Officers." In the view here taken, there are two very distinct statements. First, the supposition, is that, to organize a church, is equivalent to appointing church officers; and secondly, that church officers, from their representative character and their authority really, constitute the church. We will enter into no historical or critical examination of the assumptions at present; but submit these things, mainly to show

the popular view of Organization. Preachers, often fancy that, they have fully organized churches, when they satisfy themselves that, they have *made* elders, deacons, pastors and other officials for the congregations. It may not, however, be amiss, in this connection, to very respectfully state that, when the writer in the Christian Quarterly, attempts to show, that officials, are called out from the churches,and yet from their representative character, denote the church, he is mistaken in the application of the words *Ek*---from, or out of, and *Kaleo*, to call; and consequently, errs as to the use of the word *Ekklesia*---church. The word signifies a calling of men from the world, into communion with God and with each other, but, *Ekklesia* is never employed to denote, a calling of members, to do any work whatever, neither is it used to designate persons set, ordained or placed to perform any special service in, or for the church. It will be quite sufficient for our purpose to define organization, with sufficient clearness to be understood.

1. The word *organ*, denotes, according to Webster, "A natural instrument of action, or operation, by which some process is carried on." Hence, we speak of the organs of a plant, or animal body intending thereby, to denote the constituent parts, the instruments forming the respective bodies; or the agencies which co-operate in the accomplishment of any purpose whatever.

2. To *organize*, signifies, "To form with suitable organs, to construct, so that one part may co-operate with another.

3. *Organized*, signifies, "Formed with organs, constructed organically, systematized, reduced to a form in which all the parts may act together to one end."

We apprehend that, the cause of confusion, amongst religious teachers, arises from the military use of organization. In both military and civil usage, indeed, the word is employed to denote, the act of distributing into suitable divisions, and appointing the proper officers. It, however, cannot be used in this sense, with reference to vegetable, or animal organization. God organizes all natural bodies. Armies and deliberative bodies, are not formed from other bodies, but from unorganized masses of human beings. Not so, with reference to the organization of the church. In the scriptures, the body of Christ, is fitly represented by the body of a human being. All are aware that, the infant, at the moment of birth, is a perfectly organized being. God has set

the members, or organs as it pleased him in the body. The head, the feet, the hands, eyes, mouth, etc. etc., are all divinely set in the body. To be sure, the infant at birth is feeble, but by the growth of the members, the body grows. In the formation of a church all the members are babes, but in the use of the sincere milk of the word, they become men. The church of God, is composed of all christians throughout the earth. "There is one body," said Paul. In this one body, God has placed his Son, as the Head, and all the members, the Apostle said, "God has set," *ordained, or placed,* "as it pleased him." Hence, Organization is the exclusive work of the Father, and the assumptions of men regarding the organization of churches, seem to us, great errors in the religious world. Light may be thrown upon the subject by correctly answering the question,

WHEN IS A CHURCH ORGANIZED?

If the human body, fully represents the body of Christ, and from the moment of birth, the infant is perfectly organized, from the hour that believers give themselves to God in obedience, and give themselves to each other in the fear of God, they do to all intents and purposes, constitute a church of the saints. The mother, or model church, was planted, organized, set up, built, and acknowledged of God and by men, at Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost. when the three thousand gladly received the word, were baptized and were placed together, (Prosetetheesan.) From the hour of their birth, our information is that, they continued steadfastly, in the Apostles doctrine, and fellowship, and in the breaking of bread and in prayers." Ac. 2, 41-42.

Just here, very great and good men, early in the fourth century committed a fatal error, in failing to carry out practicallywhat their teaching plainly implied. They failed to fully comprehend that, from the moment of birth, as members of the body of Christ, each is a living stone, an active agent, instrument, or organ, for active labor, the balance of life. They failed to appreciate the doctrine of Pau that, christians, "Are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus, in order to good works, which God hath before

ordained that, we should walk in them." Eph. 2, 10. This is the doctrine the denominations have not discovered, and hence, the general failure of sects and churches to improve the spiritual condition of converts, and the utter incompetency of churches organized on the plan of Romanists and Protestants, to educate and train their members for lives of the greatest usefulness. We have not yet found the individual church, that will favorably compare with the Jerusalem model.

Under the influence of denominational organizations, we do not anticipate very great spiritual growth. More than half the converts of the age, in consequence of failing to find church influences, adequate to their spiritual wants, turn aside to the promptings of the flesh, and die without hope. Comparatively few consider church membership essential in preparing for the future state. Hence, the teachers, are quite as apt to preach men to heaven, who never bowed to the authority of Christ, as those who die members of the respective churches. Men must more earnestly study the New Testament, before it will be possible to appreciate the spiritual advantages of membership in the kingdom of God. It will be proper to examine some of the scriptural authorities regarding,

THE CHARACTER OF THE ORGANS, OR THE MATERIALS OF WHICH THE CHURCH IS COMPOSED.

The Savior said, "I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine dresser." "Ye are the branches. He that abideth in me and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit, for out of me, ye can do nothing. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more, can ye except ye abide in me." John 15, 1-7. When our Lord pronounced himself, "The true vine, and the disciples the branches," he intended to picture forth the most endearing relation which exists between himself, as the true vine, and his people as the branches. The very anxious inquiry is, *how*, and *when* do the dead become branches of the Living Vine. The Jews were called the "Natural branches," of the root of Abraham; but we become branches by being grafted into the living stock. "The good seed," is sown in "the hon-

est and understanding heart," and upon the confession and submission of the penitent believer, in baptism, he is "delivered from the power of darkness and translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son." By this adoption, we become living branches, and the adopted children of God---"heirs of God and joint heirs of our Lord Jesus Christ." In becoming "Joint heirs" with Christ, we are constituted co-workers with him---co-partners in the business of his kingdom.

We are constrained to refer again to the scripture, "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ," "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him, who has called you out of darkness into his marvelous light." 1 Pe. 2, 5-9. We insist that, there is meaning in being. "Lively Stones, in the spiritual house." The idea is, that the members are not dead, but are *living*, active, working instruments in the body of Christ. They constitute, "*An Holy Priesthood.*" Priests, under the law, were God's consecrated ministers, who were alone authorized to offer sacrifiees. Then only one tribe of Israel, could serve in this sacred capacity, but under the Gospel of Christ, all are priests, and all are kings, to offer acceptable sacrifices to God, and to rule according to the ability of each. This seems to be a divine arrangement, the true scriptural organization specially inaugurated of God, for the salvation of a lost race. In further confirmation of the truth of these things, we invite attention to

THE NEW TESTAMENT STYLE OF ADDRESS TO THE SAINTS.

The epistles, were all written to churches, to the people of God scattered abroad, or to individual christians. The reason which induced the inspired penmen to address the saints, will readily occur, when we recollect that the inspired instructions were delivered not to a class, of christians, but to all the house hold of the faithful, because they are God's agents in the conversion of the world. All responsibility of sounding out the truth, was placed upon

them, simply as members of the churches. They were, in fact, the conservators of sound doctrine—the guardians of truth against false Apostles, and the universal disseminators of light.

Paul said to the Roman brethren, "I beseech you brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. Be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye prove what is that good, and acceptable and perfect will of God." "Let no one think more highly of himself than he ought to think. As we have many members in one body, and all members have not the some office, so we being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another." Differing in gifts, he encouraged the brethren to employ all their talent. He that taught was to teach according to his ability----"Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering, or he that exhorteth, on exhortation, he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity, he that ruleth, with diligence, he that showeth mercy, with cheerfulness. Let love be without dissimulation; Abhor; that which is evil, and cleave to that which is good. Be kindly affectionate one to another, with brotherly love, in honor, preferring one another. Not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord. Rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing instant in prayer. Distributing to the necessities of the saints, given to hospitality. Bless them who persecute, bless, and curse not. Avenge not yourselves. If thine enemy hunger feed him; if he thirst give him drink; for in so doing, thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good." In all the wisdom of ages, there is not such another lesson as this; and yet, it was committed to members of the church. Why was it addressed to the poor, the humble, and frail members of despised associations. It was because, God had placed upon them the responsibility of perfecting their own character, as bright and shining lights in the world, to serve as, "The salt of the earth," that they might save themselves and others who could be brought under their influence. To the Corinthians Paul said, "Now, I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing; and that, there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment." He said again, "My beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, for-

asmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord."

We have recited these beautiful passages, mainly, to impress the great truth upon our hearts that, God requires service of all his people, and through the agency of the saints, the world is to be abundantly blessed.

We can but receive assistance in our investigations of church order by briefly referring to the phrase,

THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.

In every kingdom it is well known there are three essential constituents. The King, the Subjects and the Laws. The Son of God, though rich in Heaven, he became poor that we through his poverty, might become rich. He said, "I came down from Heaven, not to do mine own will but the will of him that sent me. One in authority so said, "I was born to be a King." While he came to rule the world, he had no qualities resembling in the slightest degree, worldly kings. He was to rule by *kindness*—in love—a bruised reed was not to be shaken, or the smoking flax to be quenched, to make his laws victorious." His voice was not heard upon the house tops; but he meekly walked the earth, 33 years, died for his enemies, was buried in the tomb of another; but on the third and appointed morning, he triumphed over the grave and "brought life and immortality to light in the Gospel." Jesus of Nazareth, was crowned King, by the Father, when he ascended from Mount Olivet, and took his seat at the right hand of the throne above.

Our Savior was constituted King of Kings, and Lord of Lords. The crown was not only placed upon his head, but the sceptre in his hand and he was told to "Rule in the midst of his enemies, till his foes should be placed under his footstool." He was also constituted, "Priest by the oath," of his Father, when seated above. The Apostle said, "If he were upon earth he could not be a priest."

The subjects of the kingdom, we may be permitted to remind our readers, are the servants of Jesus Christ. All belong to, and form the one great, "spiritual family in heaven and on earth." As to the manner of becoming members of the body, or subjects

of the King, we think, quite a sufficiency has been written. We have also, dwelt at sufficient length upon the character and general responsibilities of the "Royal priesthood, Holy nation and Peculiar people," whom God has ordained to rule the nations. "The Law was to go forth from Zion, and the word of Lord from Jerusalem." On the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit was sent from heaven to the humble disciples of our Lord upon earth, "to remain with them and guide them into all truth. The King was crowned about forty days; after the resurrection of our Savior from the grave; the subjects made ready, and people prepared for the Lord," were waiting at Jerusalem, and the Law was sent forth on Pentecost. Hence, we conclude that, the kingdom was then set up and has been in existence from that date to the present. There are, however, other matters pertaining to the kingdom, demanding attention.

I. THE MEANING OF THE KEYS OF THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.

The Savior said to Peter, when he made the good confession that, "He was the Son of the Living God," "Happy art thou, Simon Son of Jonah, for flesh and blood have not revealed it to thee; but my Father, who is in heaven. And I say unto thee, that thou art *rock*, but upon this rock—(the confession made) I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. I will give to thee, the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth I will bind in the heavens; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on the earth, I will loose in the heavens." Mat. 16, 13-20. Literally, a key is an instrument to open a door, and when the Savior said, I will give thee the keys of the kingdom, he intended merely, to assure Peter that, to him he would give full authority, to open the door of faith, first to Jews, and secondly, to the Gentiles. On Pentecost, the Jews heard and became obedient to the faith, and seven years afterwards, it pleased the Father, to send Peter to the Gentiles at the house of Cornelius. In reporting the matter, he said that "God made choice that, by his mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the Gospel and believe." Ac. 7-15.

2. THE USE OF THE KEYS.

The commission of the Apostles was, as we have seen that, whatsoever they bound on earth, should be bound in the heavens, and whatsoever they loosed on earth should be loosed in the heavens, which was nothing more nor less than the right conferred upon those inspired witnesses, to submit as the Spirit dictated, the terms of remission of sins, and our Lord was pledged to ratify them above. When they bound and loosed sins—the Redeemer bound and loosed them in the heavens.

3. WHAT DISPOSITION, WAS MADE OF THE KEYS?

When the terms of opening and shutting the kingdom, and of binding and loosing sins, were submitted, the authority was exhausted—the labor could not be repeated, would not again be necessary; and the Lord said, "Behold, I set before you an open door, and no man can shut it, neither can any open it."

From the Apostles to this day, the keys have not been needed, and they will not be wanted in the future. We may possibly, be asked the question,

WHO NOW, POSSESS THE AUTHORITY IN THE CHURCH?

This question involves the whole controversy of "*church polity*" —of the creation, and work of officers—and the whole governing power. The doctrine of Ritualism, also comes up for notice, and last, but not least, the *right* to rule, teach and work in any and every department, and capacity will demand attention. The important answer, with reference to authority in the church is easily furnished. When the disciples asked, "What shall we have? What position shall we occupy? The Lord replied, "You who have followed me, shall sit in the regeneration, on twelve thrones,

judging the twelve tribes of Israel." Mat. 19, 28. Another answered the inquiry thus, "Ye are they, who have continued with me in my temptations; and I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me. That ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and set on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." Luke 22, 28-30. When did the twelve, take their seats upon the thrones? The Savior said, "When the Son of Man, shall be seated upon the throne of his glory, you shall be exalted to this honor. Matthew said, in the "Renovation," but Luke said, "In the kingdom of the heavens."

When Jesus was in the act of departing from earth to the Father, he said, "All authority in heaven and on earth, is given into my hands." "But tarry at Jerusalem," "Receive the Holy Spirit." "Wait till you are endued with power from on high." Tarry till you are fully invested with the authority from above—till the Spirit shall come to direct you. They waited in prayerful expectation, till the day of Pentecost. The Spirit descended—filled the Apostles, enabled them to speak with tongues, and teach what the world had not previously heard—the words of eternal life. "Repentance and remission of sins were to be preached in the name of Jesus in all the world, beginning at Jerusalem. The Apostles were at Jerusalem, the Spirit had come, they spake as the Spirit gave "*utterance*," they were on the twelve thrones in the New Institution, the Regeneration, or the kingdom of heaven, giving forth the rules for the government of the nations.

We are now prepared to say that, these Apostles were the Ambassadors of Christ, the only preachers, "who *brought* glad tidings of good things, and the only persons ever clothed with the *authority* of law in the church, for the church, or over the church. In the style of one of England's clearest headed sons. The Apostles were the forerunners of the church. They were its divinely appointed and infallible teachers and legislators. They were its supreme authorities on earth, to declare its doctrine and to prescribe as *form* and *polity*—to admit into and exclude from it—to bind and to loose—to remit and retain sins. They were in short, to organize the church, as a regular society, possessed of a definite character, with its own especial rights, privileges and objects. They were to rule, as the Spirit directed them, "and it rested with them, to leave such instructions, for its future guidance, as might be necessary for its continuance and welfare, as a permanent institution in the world."

On the subject of *authority*, we are now prepared to say that, all rules, regulations, lessons and instructions, were given by the enthroned Apostles, and from their day, additional light has not been necessary. The thrones of authority, they still defiantly occupy, and all claimants of power to rule in the church since, are hirelings, usurpers—thieves and robbers, who attempt to "climb up some other way, God is judge, and he will sustain his chosen and faithful ministers of the Gospel of peace. The law was perfected, and the testimony was sealed up. More we cannot ask, nor receive.

From the scriptures, recited, we regard the following conclusions most evident.

1. "There is one body," 1 Cor. 12, 20. It was with this great truth in his mind Paul said, "I bow my knees, unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named." Eph. 3, 14-15. This spiritual family, is composed of all the pure in heart and life, in heaven and upon the earth. The unity of the church consists in the unity of the Head-ship—the One Lord, or Law-giver, "One faith, one Father of all, one baptism, one hope, and one Spirit." The church consisted of all sincere believers in Jesus Christ, who had repented of their past sins, and upon a confession of their faith, had been baptized into the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Such converts had received Christ Jesus sincerely, and walked with him in all the ordinances of the Lord's house, in a blameless manner, and were, "members one of another."

The organization of the body was completed in, "first giving themselves to God, and secondly, in giving themselves to each other in the fear of God." As Peter exhorted, "All of you, be subject one to another." 1 Pe. 5, 5. Or literally rendered from the Greek, *Hupotageete*, 2 *a. sub. pas.* "You younger, be subject to the Elders,"—and all of you be subservient to one another." Are we told that, this is no more than, to instruct the members of single congregations to be subject one to another. The only manifestation of the churches of Jesus Christ, is in the exhibition of single worshipping assemblies. As we have noted, when, any number of persons, who have put on the yoke of Christ, are found humbly walking in the ordinances of the Lord, we have a perfect exhibition of the family of God. All such associations, are constituted upon the same principles—the members are placed

in the body as, it pleased the Father, and such communities alone, have the right to look for the divine sanction. The Romish idea of organization, with the head, across the seas, and in a distant city, the high counsel of Cardinals, scattered abroad in the earth, upheld by an inferior council of bishops; supported in turn, by the lower clergy, and all resting upon the broad stratum of the laity, suggests nothing resembling in the least, a christian organization. Protestant denominations are built up, mainly in the principles of the Romish mother, and, in practice, differ not, essentially from her. In Christ's body, there is no earthly head—no higher and lower orders of councils, no clergy and laity, but the members are all kings and priests to God, the sons and daughters of the same Father, divinely placed together as it has pleased him, for the great work of saving the world. All by birth right, are fully entitled to the privilege of exercising their best powers in doing good. All are honored and exereise authority, in exact ratio, of their wise service in the cause of the Master. There are no sinecures and idlers in the kingdom of God. All are mutual laborers, helpers and co-operants in carrying out the grand purposes of the Savior.

We remind our readers, that it is vain to look for a spiritual church, through the gloom of worldly governments, and the dark clouds of denominational organizations.

2. ALL CHURCH AUTHORITY WAS VESTED BY THE SON OF GOD, IN THE HIGH COURT OF APOSTLES AND INSPIRED TEACHERS.

The thrones were occupied by the twelve Apostles, who were divinely empowered to "Judge or deliver the laws to the twelve tribes of Israel." We have seen that, the inspired Apostles were to occupy their high positions *when*, "The law should go forth out of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." The Spirit led them into all truth, and enabled them to furnish the people of God with "All things which pertain to life and godliness." Every ordinance that could be advantageously employed was revealed by the inspired ministers of the word—the "Perfect law of

Christ,," was completed, sealed and delivered to the keeping of the house-hold of faith; and as one of them said, "If we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you, than that, which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." Gal. 1, 8. The Apostles of Jesus Christ, are still the only enthroned; ambassadors, and distributors of the rich treasures of truth to the church and to the world. They stand solitary and alone, as bringers of Glad tidings and as teachers divinely commissioned. They have had no successors. Consequently, for law, light and authority, we are still to look to them alone. All churches, governed by the Apostles, are churches of Christ, and all others, are antichristian organizations, performing mixed service; but sooner or later, all such must honor Christ, as the only Head of the noble family. It becomes necessary. before proceeding further to inquire into,

"CHURCH POLITY."—THE GOVERNMENT OF THE BODY.

The word, "Polity," in its ordinary acceptation, has reference to the *form*, or *constitution*, of or state, or order of people. By it, we denote the fundamental principles of one class, or association. When used in reference to a church government, the style "*Ecclesiastical Polity*," is preferred. It may seem at first view, almost useless to inquire as to the form of government the Lord Jesus Christ established for his church. We are, however, of the judgment that, there is no subject demanding a more earnest examination.

For popular effect the leaders of the denominations, often express preference for that form of government, which promises greatest influence to the respective parties. Hence, we have noticed, efforts by powerful denominations, to show that their church constitutions are in perfect accord, with the government of the United States. While it might be well to evince our preference, for a form of government, it would seem to us better, to ascertain, if our form of church government, agrees with New Testament regulatiens. It will certainly be necessary in order to

get before the reader, a satisfactory statement of church polity, by Jesus Christ, to notice the usual forms that are prevalent in the world.

1. *Theocracy*, is that form, of government in which, God is the sole law giver and governor. All law enacting power, is in God. Hence, the Jews of old, especially, claimed to form the only Theocracy on earth. Many professed christians likewise, employ this style.

2. *Monarchy*, is of two kinds, absolute and limited. Absolute Monarchy, is a government, in which the sovereign is the sole lawgiver, and judge. This is called a "*Despotism.*" A limited monarchy, is a government, in which others besides the monarch, aid in enacting laws, and also, in the general administration of the government.

3. *An Oligarchy*, is a form of government in which the supreme power is in a few hands, a species of Aristocracy. In this character of government, the administration is by the few prominent citizens, or officials. This is the form that mainly prevails in constitutional and limited monarchies.

4. *A Democracy* is a government in which, the whole people are supposed to govern. In modern times, there is no pure democracy. There is an effort now possibly, making in the United States to approximate such a form. The original idea of the American form was, that the whole fabric of government rests, not upon numbers or wealth, so much as upon, "The virtue and intelligence of the people." This thought, was at least the morning star to the framers and fathers of our government.

Regarding these different and seemingly incongruous forms of government, we express no very decided preference; but in so far as the government of the church is concerned, we wish to be as explicit as possible.

If asked, if the government of the church is a Theocracy, or Monarchy? we might with perfect authority answer, it is both Theocratical and Monarchical. There is but one Lord, and law giver, one King, and one Judge in Heaven, or upon the earth. If asked, if the government is Oligarchy, or Aristocracy, we would promptly answer, It certainly is. In the days of the Apostles, the orders were given by the "chief men," and the "care of all the churches," rested upon their shoulders." If, indeed, the inquiry were made, if the form of government of the New Testament, is

Republican, or Democratical? we could with great confidence, respond, that so perfect a republic, never before or since its erection has existed

But should we maintain that the government of the Lord Jesus, is simply a Theocracy, Monarchy or kingdom, and no more nor less, we would certainly commit a serious fault. Neither are we justified in the assertion that the church is wholly Oligarchical, Republican or Democratical. The form of government in the church of Christ is the wonder of wonders. It fully embraces and strikingly exhibits, every sound feature of government in the universe; and if we were to assert, that all forms, and modifications of forms have been taken from the government of God, set forth in the Bible, we would not transcend the bounds of truth. While Jesus Christ is Lord of Lords and King of Kings, his subjects are all kings and priests; and whilst he rules the world, all the saints are judges of angels and men, and rulers divinely commissioned In this connection, we should ascertain,

SHOULD THE NEW TESTAMENT BE CONSIDERED THE ONLY CREED, AND ONLY DIVINE FORM OF GOVERNMENT.

The New Testament cannot be regarded a creed, in the sense, denominations use the word. In all confessions from the Romish, formed at Nice in Bythinia, in 325, to the last Pretestant summary, we discover all the items marked with mechanical exactness. The articles are given, firstly, secondly, and thirdly to the close of the thirty nine, of English church, and from the first to the fifth point of Calvanism. In the hundreds of creeds that exist, although there are extreme contradictions to each other and to the Bible, every article in considered essential, and should the truth of the least *"jot or tittle,"* be doubted, the unfortunate objectors are left without hope. In the New Testament, we see nothing in the shape of any denominational creed. We discover, no total, hereditary depravity which damns the unoffending child, who fails to receive the benefits of baptismal regeneration, or at least the mystical spiritual renovation of a large

class of churches. We discover, no direct agent to regenerate the nations. No Trinitarianism or Unitarianism is found, no Calvinism peers above the surface, and, we discover not the shadow of authority for the articles of a single creed that exists. The reason is obvious. The creeds, all profess to be composed of the *interpretations of the Scriptures*, and as the Word of God is the mind of the Father, to the world through his Son, that needs no interpretation, we cannot pronounce the Bible a creed, in the sense at least, of religious parties. The blessing is promised to the man who believes as the "*scriptures say*," or "through the words of the Apostles," and not through the imaginary interpretations of the words of eternal life, or the formal articles made by man's device.

Whosoever, therefore, looks into the New Testament, as a formal creed, drawn out by divine authority into systematic articles, can but have a very imperfect view of the subject of christian belief. While men speak of the Gospel plan of church government, we are by no means authorized to call the "doctrine of Christ," a *system, plan* or *constitution*, or *law* in any partisan sense. The doctrine of God, is the teaching of the Good Spirit, regarding our Heavenly Father and his Son our Lord Jesus Christ, and the dealings of the Father with our race, including the promises as to the future. In this teaching of the Spirit, we find ample instruction regarding, all we must believe, and all we must do, in order to eternal life. The church has full instruction in reference to her development, perfection and work. Each individual member, may find all needed light touching the labor of life; but nothing is written by the finger of God, in the style of man. Yet, when carefully studied, the light which shines along the pathway of him, who listens to the teaching of the Spirit, in the New Testament, is incomparably superior to the feeble and sickly rays emitted from the systems of the times. We need not, however, at present, do more than barely intimate, the transcendent superiority of the government set forth in the New Testament, over all human efforts to perfect systems of church government. We might, it is true say, that, the best governments of the world, are not always drawn into popular constitutions and exact forms.

In the *Magna carta*, extorted fron King John of England, by the Barons, in the thirteenth century, called, "The glorious basis of British freedom," we discover no formal constitution, or art-i

cles of government. This wonderful document, is but a concise statement of *rights*, in which, "Every individual of the nation is promised protection, in the free enjoyment of his life, his liberty, and his property, unless declared to be forfeited by the judgment of his peers, or the laws of the land." In examining for the British constitution, we find it, not in a mechanical formula—but in the history of the country. The grand principles of the religion of Jesus Christ, are clearly revealed in the New Testament, not in a formal system, creed or articles of agreement, but in orders, widely different, to men of the world and the saints of God, perfectly adapted to the exigencies of each; and in the progressive history of an age and people under the guidance of men directly inspired by the Spirit of God. As we have endeavored to show, the government, is unlike all others, and while it can be claimed not as the exclusive property of any people, it fully embraces every valuable feature of government in all the forms; and in the miraculous fitness of all the parts, we discover the only pure govment on earth. The law, is shaped from no creed, or system of laws, but is unique, in all its parts, and yet as a whole, is the Perfect law of liberty, ordained for the government of Christians. The work to be done, is all clearly revealed. the manner of working prescribed, and the division of labor, is also, plainly taught. True, the New Testament, treats not of matters, out of the sphere of religious life, or spiritual labor, and therefore formal lessons are not found, with reference to the business of the great world without.

In the administration of the divine government, its Author, depends very much, upon "The virtue and intelligence," of the subjects, and hence, the *manner*, in which the various departments of labor are conducted, is a subject of great moment. In the discussion of the divisions of labor, which will necessarily claim attention, all questions of official and non-official work, and the character, with the designations of all the agents, will necessaryl be included.

Henry Compton, of Nashville Tenn, ninety years old, was baptized into Christ, by Bro. W. C. Cook, on Lord's day, Aug. 3rd, 1873.

ELEMENTS OF CHRISTIAN TEACHING.

UNLESS we correctly understand, "The doctrine of Christ," his religion cannot interest us, and his Gospel must fail to prove, "The power of God in order to salvation." The Gospel in fact, saves, only when received with faith, into an honest and understanding heart. While "It is a savor of life unto life" to the intelligent believer, "it is a savor of death unto death," to all who fail to comprehend and appreciate its divine significance. It is fatal also, for one to imagine, that, he is not the subject of Gospel address; or that he is not at all times, fully competent lovingly to receive into his soul, "The good seed of the kingdom"- -the word of God, which is quick and powerful, sharper than a two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder, soul and spirit, the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." The Elements essential for the lost to become saved, to be "delivered from the power of darkness and translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son," are few and simple; and yet, they are so important that, without their reception in the exact *order* revealed, no one can rejoice in the redemption in Christ Jesus. Scholars know how important it is, in becoming acquainted with worldly science, to learn well first; the Elements in every department, and religious investigations, unless the anxious inquirer, is so fortunate as to discover, the beginning *lesson*, or to first find the "Corner Stone," all his efforts will prove illusive and of no value.

In denominations, it is difficult, to learn *how* or *where* to begin. With some, prayer is considered the first matter requiring attention; with others, mourning is placed first; others say Baptism, without knowledge, prayer or mourning is the first duty; while others with great assurance, urge that, repentance is the first and great commandment. Still we assure our readers, that no one of these is the first requirement, and without more accurate knowledge than is indicated by any one of these assumptions, it could scarcely be hoped that, any one would become wise unto salvation. We cannot too earnestly urge the value of the first Element in christian teaching---that which is before all others, and without the existence of which, in the heart, every other is useless. We will give the Elements in the order taught in the New Testament.

THE FAITH ONCE FOR ALL, DELIVERED TO THE SAINTS, IS THE FIRST REQUIREMENT OF SAINT AND SINNER.

Paul says, "Without faith, it is impossible to please Him, for he that comes to God must believe that, he is, and that, he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" He. 11, 6. The Apostle says again that, "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin." Ro. 14, 23. Or, "Whatsoever, is not the fruit, product, or offspring of faith, can prove of no value. From these quotations, we can see no ground for the supposition, that any demand can be made of mortals, before faith.

In opposition to these things, teachers especially in Baptist Churches confidently array, the declaration of Paul, "I have testified both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." Ac. 20, 21, and that of the Savior, "Repent ye, and believe the Gospel." Mar. 1, 15, Paul declares merely what he had in the main taught, "Amendment of life toward God, and Faith, in our Lord Jesus Christ," without the slightest reference to the order of the items. If he had been asked the question, ',What is the first requirement, made of the Greeks? He would have answered, in accordance with the facts in the case. "The very first exhortation, or commandment, I ever delivered to a Greek, was at Phillipi, about the hour of midnight, when the Jailor inquired, What must I do to be saved? I told him to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and he should be saved, and his house, and spake the word of the Lord to all that were in his house, and the same hour of the night, he was baptized, and all his, straightway, and rejoiced, believing in God, with all his house." Ac. 16; 31-34. As Luke could have had no reference to the order of the narrative, if he said, "I have taught faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ, and Reformation towards God, all would have understood the subject quite as well, as in form the words are placed.

The passage in Mark, "Repent ye, and believe the Gospel," as we said in a former number, was applicable to the Jews only, who were then believers in God, and had been from childhood; but who had practically forsaken God in violating his holy law'

As they had at least partially abandoned Moses, who spoke of Christ, they could not become believers in the Messiah, without amendment of life, first towards God. Therefore, to the Jews who confessed the authority of the God of Israel, the correct order was, reformation towards God, as an essential preparation for the exercise of the faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. But it is the extreme of folly, for any one to preach to a Greek, who was without God, and without hope, repentance, and afterwards faith. A man who believes nothing, cannot be made sensible of repentance, and as the indispensable condition to an intelligent amendment of life, the subject, must believe, that God is, as Paul said, and is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. With these scriptures before us, faith stands forth, as the very first possible requirement to any one who would enjoy the salvation of Christ.

ORDER OF THE APOSTOLIC TEACHING.

The great commission, as recorded by Matthew reads, "Go teach the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit." Mark's record is, "Go into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, and he that believes not, shall be damned." In Luke, the quotation is made from Isaiah, "That repentance and remission of sins, should be preached in all the world in his name, beginning at Jerusalem." Finally, John wrote—"Receive ye the Holy Spirit; whosoever sins you remit, they are remitted to them; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained."

We can but see fitness, in different answers to the question, "What must I, do to be saved?" On Pentecost, the Jews who had listened to Peter's discourse, fully comprehended it and were pierced to the heart through the belief of what was preached, were exhorted to, "Repent and each, to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, in order to the remission of sins." Ac. 2, 38. The Phillppian Jailor, was neither, told to repent, or be baptized. He was profoundly ignorant of the true God, and of our Lord Jesus Christ, and it would have evinced unpardonable ignorance if the Apostle had said, Repent, Pray, or be baptized, but Paul said, "Believe and in the same hour he was baptized. In no school or college in our acquaintance have the same lessons

been required of all the pupils. To some, it is necessary to begin at the Alphabet; others begin higher up in English, while others, in entering school, are placed still in higher classes. The unbeliever, like the Jailor always begins with *faith;* and any other requirement, is a gross perversion of the Divine order. One who believes, and is cut to the heart, by the truth, cannot be taught to believe, but as the Pentecostians, he should be told, to Repent —bitterly repent of all evil conduct. But had we a friend, who like Saul, had believed as he did, when the voice came from heaven to him, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest," and had sincerely repented of his evil way, as Saul had done, we could not exhort him to believe or repent, but if he had prayed, "What wilt thou have me to do?" as Saul did, it would be in keeping with every conversion of the New Testament, to say, "As you have prayed," Tarry not, but arise immediately, and be baptized and wash away your sins." We consider these, quite sufficient as to the order of Elementary lessons, and consequently, we will attempt to answer the question, next,

WHAT IS FAITH?

It is defined but once, in the Bible. Paul said, "Now, faith is the confidence of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." Heb. 12, 1. What we see is a subject of demonstration, and is not a subject of faith. Hence, Paul said, "We walk by faith, not by sight." We see not God, and can have no mathematical, or logical evidence as to the existence of the Invisible One, and therefore, our confidence upon other testimony that, God is, and is a rewarder of all who honor him, is faith. Neither can an opinion, conjecture, or dream, be the ground of faith, or of what exists, or will exist, in the invisible world, Much, therefore, which is called faith, has no connection with it whatever.

HOW DOES FAITH COME?

Paul informs us that, "Faith comes by hearing, and hearing, by the word of God," Where people, therefore, have heard the

word of God, faith may exist, but not elsewhere. The Savior prayed that, "All who shall believe on him, through the Apostles word, might be one, as He and the Father were one, that the world might believe that the Father had sent the Son. The Lord Jesus Christ said, "The blessing is to all who shall believe on me, as the Scriptures say."

We see also, that the progress of faith has been in exact ratio as the light of the Gospel has spread over the earth, and finally that, where the Gospel of Jesus Christ is unknown, faith exists not, and never can exist. Hence, the systems—or conjectures which exist in the world, under the name of "creeds,"—different beliefs, cannot constitute faith. Romanism, really, is not a matter of faith, but, is shallow fancy. Protestantism, from our stand point, should scarcely be called faith. Unitarianism, is negative—is opposition to certain speculations to Trinitarianism, and therefore. contains no element of faith. We may predicate the same of Universalism, and we presume, of all philosophical systems of rellgion, the only faith, revealed to us, is that found in the New Testament.

THE WORK OF FAITH?

In every instance, where the people in ancient times, believed the Gospel of Jesus Christ, their hearts were quickened and made alive, by the living and powerful word of God, and all who yielded to the promptings of faith, were turned from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God. Hence, faith changes the heart, and leads its subject, into the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ.

FAITH IS ONE?

The Apostle Paul, was most careful in impressing the great truth upon Christians that, in all circumstances; belief, trust, or confidence, through the truth, is one; and hence, all the saints, possess identically, the same faith. The differences in the religious world, therefore, are not in reference to faith; but are mere mat-

ters of opinion, which can save no one; and are in fact to be avoided. The Prophet said, "He that hath a dream, let him tell a dream; but he that hath my word, let him speak my word, faithfully."

So far, all we have submitted, are positive conclusions, regarding faith. There are also, speculative views, on the subject. Should we conjecture, for instance, when it is said, "He that believeth on the Son, hath everlasting life," that, we are pardoned, saved and adopted into the family of God, by the mere exercise of the mind in believing, to the exclusion of "The obedience of faith," we would fatally deceive ourselves. Faith alone is dead; but the faith which saves the soul, is that which is made alive by works.. Inasmuch, as no act of obedience without confidence, is acceptable,or can be of the least value to the soul;faith is the main spring of all acceptable religious service. It gives vitality to repentance, imparts power to baptism, and makes prayer effective. He who sows in faith, will reap abundantly in things spiritual. By faith the labor of the christian, will give an "abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ." Faith is then, the cardinal Element, in the teaching of Christ;—it is that which lays hold of every promise—it lifts our hearts from the groveling things of earth, gives us hope, as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and raises us to things heavenly and divine. Truly, it works by love, and purifies the heart—it enables us to forget the past, and to "Press towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Deprive us of this precious faith—and the world at once becomes a dreary wilderness, and all prospects, as to the future fade from our vision. By faith we look up to heaven, in confidence, and joyfully hope for immortality and eternal life, at the resurrection of the just.

A MORNING DUTY.

THIS morning of August is so calm, not a leaf is stirring on the great trees yonder. The moon shines brilliantly and the shadows are deep. "The melodies of morn," are not yet heard, Sleep still holds her gentle influence over the world. The air is cool and delightful and the quiet sweetness of the dawn should lead us to look up thankfully for the freshness and beauty of earth.

We have reason to be grateful that, nothing to alarm or distress, happened during the night. We laid us down and slept, we awaked for the Lord sustained us. Our thanks are due for his goodness and we should ask his care through the day that is so sweetly dawning upon us. We have no idea what may happen during its hours. We may need help to bear sorrow—may be called to endure suffering—may loose those dearest to us. Our best friends may be estranged—turn coldly from us, leaving us to weep bitter tears, and we are very weak, unless our hearts are stayed on God. We cannot tell what a day will bring forth and feeling the uncertainty of all earthly things, we should humbly approach a throne of grace for help, in time of need. How many old and young persons arose, in the early morning, in the months of June and July, without thinking of God. In the evening, they called earnestly upon him—with disease preying on their vitals, and were in eternity before the solemn hour of midnight. It is best to bow reverently at his feet every morning It is the duty and should be the greatest pleasure of christians to ask his love and pity.

There is peace that comes to the earnest heart, living near to God, that calms the mind and prepares it for the changes of earth. The morning seems peculiarly adapted to the cultivation of religious feeling. If we neglect the means of attaining it then, it is difficult to be humble and devotional during any part of the day. When persons, instead of sleeping late, rise up betimes, and remember their Creator, they love him more, feel more anxious to perform every other duty. We are easily influcnced during the morning hours. What is unpleasant and unkind, I think, affects us more deeply—has a more saddening effect on the mind, than during the rest of the day, and we need help from our Father to enable us to do right. Unless we guard our words and actions, we are then more inclined to go wrong, and we cannot be too careful lest we should offend our Father above, or our friends around us. We should ask help in the early morning, because we are so frail---so apt to go astray. We know not what duty we may neglect, or how much we may become excited by the troubles of life. We know not how deep and bitter may be the crosses we may meet and if we can bear them gently, patiently, it is best for us and for others. A meek and quiet spirit is of great price in the sight of God. Nothing but the influence of the christian religion will properly control our words and actions

and enable us to follow the example of the Savior. The morning then—every morning should find us at his feet. David says, "My voice shalt thou hear in the morning. Oh Lord, in the morning will I direct my prayer to thee and will look up,"

C. F.

"LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION."

"Lead us not into temptation," is a prayer we should every day make. Not only should this be the breathing of every disciple, but each should endeavor to shun whatever tempts him from the right path. There would have been very little use for Eve to make this prayer, while standing near the beautiful fruit so attractive to her, listening to the serpent-voice at her ear. If she had left the tree and the serpent and had gone to the other side of the garden where she could see neither, she would have saved herself a life's sorrow, and all the misery suffered by the world.

If we go where we are certain to meet temptation, and have not determined by the help of God, we will do right, we are very apt to yield to its force. We bring sorrow to our own hearts and wound the feelings of others. Young christians should study —should earnestly inquire, which is the correct course for them to take? If they learn which is right or which wrong, they are happier not to be influenced by others, but to avoid all wavering and argument, and say, "I am a christian. I do not wish to wound the cause I have professed." It is often difficult to act thus, but it saves sorrow and self reproach afterwards. It is not pleasant to reflect, "I committed a fault---I set an example I do not now, myself approve." It is to be regretted we all, at times, yield to temptation, but, when we repent and determine we will not again sin in the same manner, but humbly ask forgiveness of our Father, he promises to forgive and to blot out our sin. This is all we can do, and if God forgives, we should not be unhappy, but should for the future avoid the same fault.

Many young persons yield to temptation and are facinated by the gayities and dissipation of the world. It is so seldom we meet one who holds the profession of his faith unmoved. There is not enough study of God's word,

and of course little intelligence in the Scriptures. When this is the case, persons who have confessed the name of Christ and have taken the Bible alone for a rule of life, are tempted to give it up for the systems and creeds of men. The temptation is greater when the principles of Christ's religion are not understood. They give up the confession authorized by the Savior, more than eighteen hundred years ago, for what has been gotten up in the last 2 or 300 years. Numbers of sincere persons are leaving these modern inventions and are coming back to a simple, "Thus saith the Lord." That all earnest persons may be one, by believing through the word of the Savior, we should pray as he did. We are very weak and need help, to cling to Christ. Lead us not into temptation, should be our constant prayer, but deliver from evil.

C. F.

THE STONE ROLLED AWAY.

Bro. David Walk, has a discourse in the last Christian Standard, well calculated to benefit persons who wish to be resigned to the will of the Father in Heaven, and to cast their care upon Him.

"The Stone Rolled away," is the subject, and his manner of treating it, presents in an impressive manner. Such plain, simple talks come from the heart, and they lighten the hearts of the careworn and weary. C. F.

When the women took spices to the sepulchre to embalm the body of the Savior, they said among themselves, "Who shall roll away the Stone from the door? for it was very great. When they looked up, the stone had been rolled away and there was nothing to prevent them from going in to see the Lord they had loved so well. A young man in a long white garment was sitting inside the Sepulchre, who no doubt startled them, but he tried to calm their fears, by telling them. "the Lord had risen, he was not there." While the Savior was with his disciples, one of the first lessons he taught them, was firm trust in himself---that his Father would feed and clothe them, and they need have no anxious cares for the future. Well says one, do you believe this? Bro. Walk says, "Yes I believe it now though the time was when I did not, at least my faith was weak. Some regarded it more sentimental than practical. I thought it would answer for the

birds and flowers, but not for men and women. Birds and flowers do not pay butcher's bills, doctors bills, taxes, school bills, church expenses, &c. and they may be quite indifferent with regard to such matters. This is the way I used to reason. I have now, a larger and more healthful trust in Christ. I used to say to myself, What shall I eat? what shall I drink? How shall I be clothed? What shall I do when I am old? What shall I do when no one will listen to me or be guided by my counsels? The hope of laying up something for a "rainy day," has long since departed and I have neither house, home nor shelter. I have tortured myself with such thoughts while God was feeding the birds and clothing the lilies. True, cold winter comes and the voice of the bird is silenced and the beauty of the flower perishes, but neither the melody of the one, nor the sweetness of the other is forgotten. God takes care that the bird shall be sheltered in the storm, and the flower seed shall nestle in the earth. He knows we need his blessings and when we make honest efforts to obtain these, we should not fear that our Father will not give them to us. The trouble is, we fear to trust him. We pretend to confide in him, but really do not. We waste time in complaining and fretting, and dishonor our Heavenly Father. As I said, I did not once trust him as I should, but have now a more healthful confidence in his mercy. For this reason, I have concluded to wait till no one wishes to hear my voice or listen to my counsels. That time may never come, and why did I not think of this before? I may not know old age or decay of faculties. I may lay down my body and my charge at once and cease to work and to live.

Why did I not come to this conclusion before, instead of spending so many torturing years? I am trusting God for the greater, why should I not trust Him for the less? I am trusting Christ for salvation, for a peaceful death, for a joyful resurrection, for a home in heaven, and cannot I trust him for a little bread and a few clothes? What is my duty as a christian? It is my duty to be industrious, to be diligent in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord, and then, it is my duty to repose unquestioning faith in God. Will anxious thoughts bread and clothing? Will they shelter me from the storm? They will be of no use, If I do my duty, God will do the rest. If I do my duty I need not fear. The stone will be rolled away and I will not have the labor of moving its great weight. Our real wants are few—imaginary ones are many. Our Father will always give us what we need, and

we rebel against him, on account of our imaginary wants. We cherish envy, strife, inordinate desire in our hearts, and thus roll great stones between ourselves and Christ. Instead of inquiring in faith and prayer, "Who shall roll away the stone for us? we build mountains between ourselves and our Savior. The troubles we make for ourselves are greater than those that come upon us. The burden of life is, the great stone in our path, and who shall roll it away. The women expected to find a great stone and they found an open door and attending angels. In place of a dead hope, they found Living Christ. Oftentimes when we look forward to a sorrow that we fear will crush us ---when we think the light and the joy are fast fading from our homes, is it not true, that the thunder rolls, the lightning flashes, the torrents fall, but the stone is nevertheless rolled away, and we find an open sepulchre.

We are thankful for the comfort and pleasure we have derived from the perusal of this sermon. One cannot read it without feeling its truthfulness—without feeling that the great stones he sees before him in his pathway, are often placed there by his own want of faith in God----his want of firm faith in his Heavenly Father. Let us remember that the goodness of God never fails us, and if we do our duty, the stone will be rolled away, so that we can enter freely into the sepulchre and see the place where the Lord lay." Let us remember, "That in many an earthly grief or fear, a light unknown, has with a joyful suddenness, in heavenly glory shone."

CONSULTATION MEETING.

THE brethren in Franklin, Williamson County, Tenn. very cordially invite their brethren, in Middle Tennessee, and throughout the State to meet them for religious Consultation and advice, on Thursday, Sept. 25th, 1873, and to continue as long as may be thought best. Arrangements, will be made to entertain all who may attend. They say, "We have no hobby—no special theory to discuss, but desire to bring the brethren face to face, that they may become better acquainted with each other's views."

The purposes seem good and we trust the brethren generally, especially in Tennessee, will take deep interest in the meeting. Indeed, we should be highly gratified for brethren from other States, to come amongst us, as students of the Bible, and friends

of the cause of Christ. Such meetings can but result in great good, when the beloved brethren make an humble and earnest effort, to "stand fast in one Spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the Gospel." Solomon said, "In the multitnde of counsellors there is safety." Prov. 11, 14. Brethren shall, we not endeavor, to take counsel from each other? especially, regarding the obligations that rest on the disciples of our Lord in this favored land?

"HOW PLEASANT."

"How pleasant," thought Eve, as she stood before a tree laden with rich fruit. The turf had come fresh from the hand of her Maker. The flowers of the garden were lovely and, she herself, was the sweetest flower that had bloomed in the young world. Her Creator had told her not to touch the fruit of a certain tree, but she thought, "How pleasant,"---how desirable, She ate and died. "How pleasant," says the man of years as he leaves the crowded assembly. He is weary and wants stimulus. He takes the intoxicating glass and is soon lost to thought---to the memory of all that is good and pure. He goes down the precipice of ruin and none can stay him in his mad career. "How pleasant," says the young girl as she feels the cool breeze on her heated brow, after hours of dancing, "How delightful the fresh breath of heaven." It is pleasant for the moment, but for the enjoyment of so sweet a pleasure, come weeks and months of disease and suffering—often death.

"How pleasant," says the man who indulges his appetite. Rich food gives delight and he rejoices in what will paralyze mind and body. He digs his grave with his teeth and fills it while his friends wonder at the mysterious dispensations of Providence. "How pleasant," says the devotee of fashion to be clothed in the beautiful things made by art and man's device. Silks and laces, velvets, diamonds, pearls and all else precious form her highest joy. She loves the gaze of admiring eyes, to hear it said, "How elegant," and she moves in pride, forgetful of the good she might do-- of the real happiness she might enjoy, and confer upon others. She forgets the day of reckoning when these beautiful things will no longer be of use She cannot take them with her to that solemn world she is hasting to, and neglects to clothe herself in the white robes offered by the Savior.

So many things are forgotten that she may be clothed fashionably. She forgets as Hood says, the sorrow she might have soothed and the unregarded tears, and all the wounds she might have healed, in the swiftly passing years. The same writer remarks, "I dressed in beautiful dress, I bought with silver and gold. Silk and satin and costly furs. In many an ample fold, but I never remembered the shivering limbs that froze in the winter's cold. The wounds I might have healed, the human sorrow and smart, and yet it never was in my soul, to play so ill a part, but evil is wrought by want of thought, as well as want of heart." For the sake of what is pleasant at the present moment, duty is forgotten, health lost, and future happiness forfeited. The grave is filled by thousands, who studied only what they enjoyed at the present hour, and caused them to exclaim, "How Pleasant."

C. F.

PURE INFLUENCE.

NOTHING makes young persons more interesting than the exercise of pure influences. A girl who has the courage to say to a young friend, "This is wrong," that will injure you, and to avoid all wrong herself, may do much good in the world and enjoy happiness that does not pass away. I was pleased with some thoughts of J. T. Holland on this subject---the influence he thought it possible for a young girl to exert. A gentleman speaking of her says, "We read the same books and talked about them. We engaged in the same efforts to arouse a spirit of literary culture in the neighborhood. I learned to look at my own character and actions through her womanly eyes. I added her conscience to my own. I added her sense of what was proper, becoming and tasteful, to my own. Her power over me was not only refining but purifying. She was a being ineffably sacred to me. She was never associated in my mind with a coarse thought. She lifted me into a realm entirely above the atmosphere of sensuality. I have never lost the respect for woman she taught me. I have seen many with low and unworthy aims, but I have not seen one so degraded that I did not wish to hide her shame from ribald eyes and restore her to that better self which is seldom wholly lost. If all young girls exercised an influence so pure, (and they should do so,) the world would be very different. They would have

the pleasure of knowing they had lifted young friends into a purer atmosphere, and caused them to live purer lives. They would exert the power, that all noble, high minded women are capable of exercising on those with whom they associate, and would lead them, not only to a better life here, but to an after life of pleasantness and peace.

C. F.

NEW CHURCH ORGANIZED.

On Lord's day August 31st, 1873, in company with Brother C. M. Wilmeth, we attended the placing into working condition, some 20 or more, disciples at Donaldson, seven miles from Nashville, on the Lebanon road. They had given themselves to the Lord, by faith aud obedience to the Gospel; and they stood up, and gave to each other, "The right hands of fellowship," that they would live as co-workers in keeping the ordinances of the Lord, and sounding out the truth to the world.

The brethren at once determined to make arrangements to build a house in which the saints could meet for worship, and our hopes are strong that, they, will cheerfully discharge to God, to each other and to the world, every duty that may be required of them.

ITEMS OF INTEREST.

Brother W. F. Todd, of Goodlettsville, Tenn., who is now laboring as Evangelist, under the encouragement of various congregations, closed a few days since at Burnett's Chapel, near Lavergne, a meeting with quite a number of accessions to the cause of the Savior. Our brother seems to be an earnest, and straight forward man, and we look for good results, wherever he exhibits the Gospel of Peace.

The brethren of the same congregations, are also holding up the hands of Brother A. L. Johnson, who labors in Montgomery, Stewart, Humphreys, and possibly some adjoining sections of Ky. From our knowledge of the candor, clear views and since e love of the cause, which our brother, has long evinced, we fear not that his works will fully accord with the doctrine of Christ. Two more such earnest brethren, could not have been chosen by the churches, for the work of Evangelizing.